AMS has reviewed the petitions and data submitted, gathered information from government and industry resources and is proposing to revise the standards based on the recommended changes.

A 60 day comment period is provided for interested persons to comment on changes to the standards.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

Dated: February 26, 1999.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 99–5356 Filed 3–3–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[S&T99–001]

Plant Variety Protection Advisory Board; Open Meeting

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Plant Variety Protection Advisory Board.

DATES: March 24, 1999, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., open to the public.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the National Agricultural Library Building, Conference Room 1400 (Fourteenth Floor), Beltsville, Maryland.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alan A. Atchley, Acting Commissioner, Plant Variety Protection Office, Room 500, National Agricultural Library Building, Beltsville, Maryland 20705 (301/504–5518).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the provisions of section 10(a) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub.L. 92–463), this notice is given concerning a Plant Variety Protection Advisory Board meeting. The Board is established pursuant to the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2321, *et seq.*). The proposed agenda for the meeting will include discussions of: (1) a proposal to increase user fees for the Plant Variety Protection Office, (2) the handling of Plant Variety Protection Office decisions which are being protested by applicants, (3) long term strategic planning for efficient functioning of the Plant Variety Protection Office, and (4) and other related topics. Written comments may be submitted to the contact person listed above before or after the meeting.

Dated: February 26, 1999.

Kenneth C. Clayton,

Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 99–5357 Filed 3–3–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99–002–1]

University of Saskatchewan; Receipt of Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status for Flax Genetically Engineered for Tolerance to Soil Residues of Sulfonylurea Herbicides

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has received a petition from the University of Saskatchewan seeking a determination of nonregulated status for a flax line designated as CDC Triffid, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to residues of sulfonylurea herbicides in soil. The petition has been submitted in accordance with our regulations concerning the introduction of certain genetically engineered organisms and products. In accordance with those regulations, we are soliciting public comments on whether this flax line presents a plant pest risk.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before May 3, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Docket No. 99–002–1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Suite 3C03, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 99–002–1. A copy of the petition and any comments received may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to that room to inspect the petition or comments are asked to call in advance of visiting at (202) 690–2817 to facilitate entry into the reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. James White, Biotechnology and Biological Analysis, PPQ, APHIS, Suite 5B05, 4700 River Road, Unit 147, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–5940. To obtain a copy of the petition, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734–4885; e-mail: Kay.Peterson@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The regulations in 7 CFR part 340, ''Introduction of Organisms and Products Altered or Produced Through Genetic Engineering Which Are Plant Pests or Which There Is Reason to Believe Are Plant Pests,'' regulate, among other things, the introduction (importation, interstate movement, or release into the environment) of organisms and products altered or produced through genetic engineering that are plant pests or that there is reason to believe are plant pests. Such genetically engineered organisms and products are considered ''regulated articles.''

The regulations in § 340.6(a) provide that any person may submit a petition to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeking a determination that an article should not be regulated under 7 CFR part 340. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of § 340.6 describe the form that a petition for determination of nonregulated status must take and the information that must be included in the petition.

On December 1, 1998, APHIS received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 98–335–01p) from the Crop Development Centre (CDC) of the University of Saskatchewan (CDC/Saskatchewan) of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, requesting a determination of nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for a flax (*Linum usitatissimum* L.) line designated as CDC Triffid, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to residues of sulfonylurea herbicides in soil. The CDC Triffid flax line was developed for use as a rotational crop alternative with cereals such as wheat and barley on soils containing residues of sulfonylurea herbicides. The CDC/Saskatchewan petition states that the subject flax line should not be regulated by APHIS because it does not present a plant pest risk.

As described in the petition, the CDC Triffid flax line has been genetically engineered to contain a modified acetolactate synthase (*als*) gene derived from *Arabidopsis thaliana*. The *als* gene encodes a modified acetolactate synthase enzyme that extends to root tissues the reported natural ability of flax to withstand sulfonylurea herbicides. The subject flax line also contains and expresses the nopaline synthase (*nos*) gene derived from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* and the neomycin phosphotransferase-II (*nptII*) gene derived from *Escherchia coli*. The *nos* and *nptII* genes are used as selectable markers during the plant